

this morning. It has been in the hopper for almost 12 hours now. It has been called a sham. It has been called a farce. But let me tell you, it's a bald-faced lie to the American people. This so-called energy bill is not going to produce one drop of oil, not the first one. We don't know all that is in this bill because we were just presented it last night.

There are some things that are not in this bill, and I can guarantee you there is no nuclear energy. We're not going to even be able to drill for oil and gas on the Outer Continental Shelf. There is no way to stop in this bill the endless lawsuits by the radical environmentalists. This is a nonenergy energy bill. It's a lie to the American public. It is a cover to try to look like the Democratic majority is trying to do something. They say they represent the poor, the elderly and the underprivileged. But that is a lie, too, because the underprivileged and the poor are being hammered by increased energy costs. And we cannot afford to continue on this process.

A NEW DIRECTION ENERGY POLICY

(Mr. WALZ of Minnesota asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. WALZ of Minnesota. Mr. Speaker, it is true: The Bush-Cheney energy plan has been a giant success, but for big oil companies, not the American people. America is still addicted to foreign oil, and gas prices are through the roof.

It's time for a new direction in our energy policy. This week, House Democrats are bringing up that legislation. I was proud to work with a bipartisan group of Democrats and Republicans to craft a piece of legislation. Many of those ideas are incorporated into this plan. It invests in renewable energy, responsibly increases domestic supply by opening up the Outer Continental Shelf for drilling and releases oil from the Strategic Petroleum Reserve.

One thing it does that is very good, it eliminates unnecessary tax breaks and subsidies to Big Oil and asks them to pay their fair share of royalties so we can invest in renewables.

All Americans, Republicans and Democrats, who believe it is time for our country to move in a new direction towards energy independence should join us and move this ball forward. This legislation will create millions of good-paying American jobs in the renewable energy industry, and it will begin to break the stranglehold of foreign oil over this Nation.

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STOP PLAYING POLITICS WITH AMERICA'S ENERGY INDEPENDENCE

(Mr. PENCE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1

minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. PENCE. Mr. Speaker, the American people are hurting. They are struggling under the weight of record gasoline prices, and in that cause Republicans have been fighting for a comprehensive energy bill that includes more drilling. Three-quarters of Americans agree with us.

Just last week, the drill-nothing Democrat Congress announced they are going to bring an energy bill to the floor that includes more drilling. And now they say Republicans have to take "yes" for an answer.

Well, I would suggest to my countrymen, Mr. Speaker, that they look at the fine print. The drill-nothing Congress has brought a bill that actually includes basically drill-nothing provisions. They say "yes" to drilling, but not in Alaska, not in the eastern gulf, and not within 50 miles.

They say "yes" to drilling, but States can decide, even though they get absolutely no revenues for choosing to drill. I guess States are going to just allow drilling out of the goodness of their hearts.

They say "yes" to drilling, but litigation rules will allow environmental lawyers to tie up all leases from the very day they are filed.

I say to my House Democrat colleagues from my heart, on behalf of our constituents who are struggling under record gasoline prices, end this charade. Stop playing politics with America's energy independence. Bring us a full and fair debate to this floor and you will see a bipartisan result.

CONTRACTOR ACCOUNTABILITY

(Ms. SCHAKOWSKY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. Mr. Speaker, one year ago today, Blackwater contractors opened fire in Baghdad's Nisoor Square, killing 17 Iraqi civilians. This wasn't the first time private security contractors used excessive force.

It has now been 21 months since the Christmas Eve murder in the Green Zone, and 3½ years since a Blackwater helicopter dropped CS gas on a traffic jam in Baghdad. Yet there have been no arrests, no charges, no trials and no conviction. In fact, the Blackwater contractor responsible for the Christmas Eve shooting is now employed as a prison guard in Washington State.

Instead of holding Blackwater accountable for violating the law, last April the State Department rewarded Blackwater by renewing their billion dollar contract. Before we even consider giving Blackwater another penny of U.S. taxpayer dollars, we should hold private security contractors accountable under the law.

On the 1-year anniversary, I urge my colleagues to cosponsor the Stop Outsourcing Security, SOS, Act, H.R. 4102, to begin phasing out the use of private security contractors. The

longer we wait to fix this problem, the worse the situation is going to get, not only for Iraqi civilians, but for our troops on the ground.

DO-NOTHING CONGRESS

(Ms. FOXX asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, this is indeed the do-nothing Congress. The Speaker of the House and the majority leader in 2006 made many, many promises. Among them was to bring down the price of gasoline, to have the most open Congress in the history of the Congress, to have the most bipartisan Congress. Every single one of those promises has been broken, and broken many, many times.

It is important that the American public understand that the Democrats are in charge of this Congress. The Democrats have the capability of bringing up a bill to allow us to vote to bring down the price of gasoline. But the bill they are going to bring up today is bogus, a sham, an illusion, a charade. All of those words that have been used are appropriate.

The Democrats are proving that they are anti-American energy. Republicans are pro-American energy. Republicans want to increase the supply. We want to increase our efforts at conservation. We want to increase alternatives.

The Democrats are totally out of touch with the American people. From August 1 until the end of December, they plan to work 14 days for the American public.

MCCAIN'S ASSESSMENT OF ECONOMY SHOWS HE REALLY IS NOT AN EXPERT ON THE ECONOMY

(Ms. WATSON asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. WATSON. Mr. Speaker, earlier this year Senator McCain said he needed to study up on the economy because it was not his strong suit. You can certainly say that again. Yesterday Senator McCain once again said, and I am quoting now, "The fundamentals of our economy are strong." His comments came on a day when the stock market fell 500 points, its worst drop in 7 years, and Lehman Brothers filed for bankruptcy.

What fundamentals is Senator McCain referring to? It certainly can't be the fundamentals of ensuring more Americans have a job. Every moment this year, the Bush-McCain economy has shed tens of thousands of jobs. To date, more than 600,000 jobs have been lost.

Nor can it be the fundamentals of ensuring that middle-class Americans are prospering. Over the last 8 years under the Bush-McCain economy, real wages have actually fallen by \$300, while basic necessities like food, gas, health care, and education have skyrocketed.